

**Due: Friday February 27, 2015**

**The Skinny:** You will conceive, plan, write, edit and submit a short (300-ish) word personal essay.

**Choose a topic** – as political as the right to vote being extended to landed immigrants, as controversial as the legalization of drugs, as light as the impact of CGI on the sci-fi film genre, or as silly as what to do with toenail clippings.

**Brainstorm your topic** – this is not a research essay – it's a personal one. What do you know about it, how do you feel about it? Jot down all of your thoughts in point form and in full sentences. What do you want the purpose of this essay to be??

**Decide on your direction. What do you want the effect/meaning of your piece to be?**

**Outline your essay** – ok, so take a look at all of the ideas you generated in your brainstorm. Which ones go together to support the argument you're making? Which examples are worth keeping, which are worth throwing away? Now, organize your essay – it's not the same as an academic one, necessarily, but you need to work out how the essay is going to develop. What order are the examples/ideas going to appear in? Are you going to hit the readers right away with your thesis, or build slowly to it?

**Decide on your style** – will you be writing in a humorous and light tone, or a serious and academic one? Will you be speaking in the first person? Will you be using casual, conversational language and including slang, or keeping your voice informational? Choose based on what will work well with the topic and purpose.

**Write the rough draft.** Follow your outline. Let the ideas flow. Choose your words carefully. Write the whole thing!

**Sit on it for a bit.** It's good to take a breather from your writing – it allows you to look at it again with fresh eyes. Here's a good time to let a peer edit it for you and make suggestions.

**Edit the draft** – here's the real work, but this is where the real payoff is. Remember that editing is NOT proofreading, though it's okay to make corrections when you catch errors. Editing is a complete evaluation of the paper's effectiveness – look at these main points: are all of your sentences complete, are they in the right places, are they all necessary, have you selected the appropriate words in each one to communicate exactly what you want? Does your essay unfold the way you want it to – are there paragraphs missing, or are some in the wrong places? Do you finish/connect your points? Is it interesting, compelling, infuriating, amusing – is it what you wanted it to be???? Make necessary changes.

**Proofread – you know what this means.** Spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting!!

**Title it and publish it!**

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**Marking Scheme for your Personal Essay Assessment – Writing (Overall Expectations 1-4)**

**K/U /10**

**Identifying Topic, Purpose, and Audience** - Did you use your knowledge of what a Personal Essay's purpose is to decide on your topic?

**Using knowledge of form and style** – did you select your style based on your essay's purpose?

**Generating and focussing ideas** – did you use the strategies from class to brainstorm your ideas, decide on a purpose, and develop a thesis statement?

**Organizing ideas**- the outline: did you identify, sort, and order your ideas well to suit the content and purpose of your essay? Did you determine whether the ideas and information gathered are interesting, relevant, and appropriate to meet the requirements of the writing task?

**Establishing voice** - did your voice come through distinctively in this piece?

**T /10**

**Critical Literacy** – through this process, did you improve on your ability to reveal your personal experiences, view, values, and opinions in writing?

**Revision** – how well did you revise the rough draft to improve the content, organization, clarity, and style using the techniques we've discussed in class?

**Diction** – was your word choice suitable to the audience, subject, and purpose of the paper?

**Producing the draft** – was your rough draft complete? Did it follow the goals of the outline?  
Does it develop your purpose all of the way through?

**C /10**

**Sentence Craft** – were your sentences complete, well-constructed, and purposeful?

**Spelling** – did you follow the rules and conventions of spelling?

**Vocabulary** – did you build vocabulary during this exercise during the editing process? (using resources to check for meaning, exploring synonyms, incorporating specialized language, etc.)

**Grammar** – did you use the conventions of grammar correctly?

**Punctuation** – did you use punctuation correctly to establish meaning?

**A /10**

**Proofreading** – did you spend the time to check your draft for errors, and then correct them?

**Publishing** – did you format your draft to suit the subject matter, style, and purpose of your draft?

**The Finished Piece** – does your final draft reflect the expectations of the assignment evaluation criteria? (does it defend your clear thesis statement by developing and supporting the argument throughout the essay?)

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